

QEP Committee Minutes

Friday, April 28, 2023

3:15 p.m.

Members Present: Piers Rawling (Chair), Philosophy; Latika Young, Undergraduate Studies; Maxine Jones, History; Jim Whyte, Nursing; Beth Hodges, Research; Dawn Carr, Sociology; Cathy Levenson, Biomedical Sciences; Ashley Bush, Business; Stephen Tripodi, Social Work; Casey Dozier, Career Center; Gale Etschmaier, Libraries; Justin Kennemur, Chemistry and Biochemistry; Jorge Galeano Cabral, Engineering; Jorge Piekarewicz, Physics; Cindy Chapa, Communication; Mark Riley; Graduate School.

Members Excused: Toby Park-Gaghan, Education Policy; Athanasios Vouzas, Biological Science; Jayne Standley, Music; Michelle Rambo-Roddenberry, Engineering.

Staff Present: Leslie Richardson, Center for Teaching and Advancement; Sara Hamon, Provost's Office; Charlotte Nafe, Provost's Office; Galiya Tabulda, Provost's Office; James Hunt, Institutional Research; Monoka Venters, Provost's Office; James Beck, Graduate School.

The Chair convened the meeting and indicated the agenda would include discussion and selection of QEP initiatives to be included in our final plan. The Initiatives sub-committee shared a handout with the four preliminary initiatives they proposed for consideration by the full committee. Chair Rawlings indicated that the format would be to discuss each one briefly and then decide which combination to pursue based on all we have learned and considered during this process. Then following the meeting, Chair Rawling will coordinate with a sub-committee to develop estimated cost figures for the initiatives that can be presented to Provost Clark for comment and direction. Chair Rawling briefly highlighted the sub-committee's four potential initiatives and then presided over discussion of each one as follows.

Graduate Education Resource Center

Establish a Graduate Education Resource Center to build on the Graduate School's current efforts to serve as a "one-stop shop" for questions, training (e.g., on topics such as writing, public speaking, time management), and connection to campus resources via partnerships that are cultivated to meet the specialized needs of doctoral students.

The full committee was enthusiastic about the academic support services that could be provided and coordinated through the Graduate Education Resource Center.

They discussed the importance of improving student writing through a variety of campus partners in collaboration with the Graduate Education Resource Center. While there are existing courses on writing (e.g., writing in the content area or scientific writing), these are often only learned about by word of mouth. This center could be a "one-stop shop" for classes and other resources to be advertised and known. It also was suggested that faculty could design "writing in the discipline" courses and co-curricular writing communities. For example, Sociology has created a student writing enhancement group that has grown into its own entity over the past six years with resulting grants and publications.

Students also would benefit from connection to campus resources that allow them to develop public speaking skills, and the graduate education resource center could promote such collaborations. Beyond what happens in the classroom, students more need practice presenting their research and papers for peer

and faculty feedback. The Graduate Education Resource Center might be able to facilitate and encourage some degree of peer feedback and interdisciplinary engagement.

The committee expressed interest in additional career planning and placement opportunities through collaboration between the Career Center and the Graduate Education Resource Center, especially since the QEP survey indicated a high level of student interest in jobs outside of academia. There is also potential to contract with a vendor for a student platform that gives 24-hour career planning support (currently in use at UF). The Career Center already has a professional readiness badge tailored to undergraduates, and now the Career Center is trying to develop one that is broad enough for graduate students yet specific to the discipline.

Related to academic support, members expressed the importance of reading and spoken language proficiency that goes along with effective writing skills. The Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) has a course that is required when deemed necessary, mainly for international students. While there is a substantial cost for each six-week session, it is very valuable to students in terms of support and future success. More information is needed to know if the department or the student pays the CIES course fee (thought to be \$2,000). It was pointed out that doctoral students have a 1st or 2nd year diagnostic exam, and students should complete the CIES course before taking the diagnostic exam.

Related to academic support, students do not know where to find and how to identify research software. This software could be advertised at the Graduate Education Resource Center and then provide resources so they can take advantage of it.

The committee agreed they want the Graduate Resource Center, as it will solve many problems they have discussed. A physical office space for the graduate education resource center is important for serving students and must be discussed with the Provost and addressed in the plan to some degree even as we work out space assignment challenges.

Graduate Student Teaching Enhancement

Establish ongoing support and expectations for graduate students' development as teachers, to enrich the work they do in FSU classrooms, build their confidence, deepen their pedagogical knowledge and skills, and increase their marketability.

Discussion included how teaching enhancement could fall under programming offered by campus partners and hosted within the proposed Graduate Education Resource Center or be established as a higher priority as a separate program. The goal would be to provide additional support and development beyond what is already offered and required by the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) in order to be credentialed as a Teaching Assistant. The QEP survey indicated that TAs feel like teaching support and development wains after PIE. This new program could be set up to support development of "teaching in the discipline" courses in academic departments that don't already offer one. The Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) is willing to support faculty interested in designing such courses or in developing a university-wide pedagogy course that includes development of a teaching portfolio.

Doctoral Student Council on Research and Creativity

Establish a competitive internal grant program for doctoral student funding that promotes high-quality research and creative projects and/or enables related travel to present or exhibit work at conferences or professional meetings.

The committee expressed a lot of interest in this initiative and thought it was opportune time for it given what has been accomplished with the faculty CRC. Members understood that there will not be enough money to support every student but having more funding options incentivizes student action. This CRC

would be separate from other grants provided by COGS and departments. There is a great need for more travel money for students. Maybe the CRC could also fund students having to pay for summer credit hours, especially for international students so they could work with faculty over the summer. The committee agreed that a lot of things need to be researched and negotiated to make it work, but it would go a long way in helping colleges to match funds to promote student research and presentations.

Online Doctoral Student Progression Tracking Tool

Launch an online doctoral student progression tracking tool that builds on an existing FSU prototype (GradPhile) to collect and share more timely and nuanced faculty feedback with doctoral students along completion of program milestones.

There is a lot of enthusiasm and agreement about the importance and value of implementing this tool. However, there is also some concern and mixed opinions about how long the technology implementation may take and how that might impact the timeframe we have for QEP assessment. Funding would be needed for staff who could help with the implementation. Students and faculty would clearly benefit from enhanced information and access to records as the tool facilitates annual evaluations and feedback for achievement of program milestones. The most difficult component will be developing a standardized annual evaluation because departments won't like being forced into a uniform review.

Other Discussion

The full committee was pleased with the sub-committee's work which focused on student success and measurable goals. The committee decided to summarize strengths, implementation options, and cost estimates for each of the initiatives to take to the Provost rather than ranking them. The committee agreed that the Graduate Education Resource Center and the doctoral student "CRC-like" program are the major initiatives. They will package the Graduate Education Resource Center, the Graduate Student Teaching Enhancement, and the Online Doctoral Student Progression Tracking Tool initiatives together. The Graduate Student Teaching Enhancement program could be separated out if needed. The committee unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed the initiatives as outlined in the attachment and recommended that Chair Rawling present them to the Provost with cost estimates.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and said he will continue to send updates via email over the summer. The QEP report to SACSCOC is due in September so work will continue over the summer with those who are available. Upon motion of the Chair, the Committee adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

Handout:

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